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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/564,280	05/01/2006	Gerald Murray Smith	4502-1094	8853
466	7590	11/12/2008	EXAMINER	
YOUNG & THOMPSON			NGUYEN, SON T	
209 Madison Street			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
Suite 500			3643	
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314				
		MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE	
		11/12/2008	PAPER	

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>	
	10/564,280	SMITH, GERALD MURRAY	
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>	
	Son T. Nguyen	3643	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 October 2008.  
 2a) This action is FINAL.                    2b) This action is non-final.  
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application.  
 4a) Of the above claim(s) 6-9 is/are withdrawn from consideration.  
 5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.  
 6) Claim(s) 1-5 is/are rejected.  
 7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.  
 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.  
 10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
     Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
     Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).  
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
 a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:  
     1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
     2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
     3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>1/11/06, 6/13/06, 3/27/07</u> .	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ .

## DETAILED ACTION

### ***Election/Restrictions***

1. Applicant's election without traverse (because applicant did not provide specific argument against the restriction) of invention I, claims 1-5, in the reply filed on 10/29/08 is acknowledged. Claims 6-9 have been withdrawn from consideration due to the claims belonging to a non-elected invention.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

3. **Claims 1-3** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by McCrory et al. (2004/0123520A1 on form PTO-1449).

For claim 1, McCrory et al. teach a natural biodegradable felt suitable for growing seeds, seedlings, or plants comprising a mass of predominantly unscoured animal wool [0007][0013], hair [0012], or fur [0007][0013].

For claim 2, McCrory et al. teach the felt being suitable for growing seeds, seedlings or plants, or for the transporting fruit, shellfish, fish, vegetables and plants [0016][0031][0032], constructed at least in part from a felt of needlepunched [0012] [0013] unscoured animal wool [0007][0012][0013].

For claim 3, McCrory et al. teach the substrate includes seeds lodged in the felt [0031][0032].

4. **Claims 4-5** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McCrory et al. (as above).

For claim 4, McCrory et al. teach the substrate being made out of human hair or animal hair, or a combination of both. However, McCrory et al. are silent about the substrate is constructed substantially only from the fibres of unscoured sheep wool and dags. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the substrate of McCrory et al. out of substantially only from the fibres of unscoured sheep wool and dags, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious choice.

For claim 5, McCrory et al. are silent about the natural biodegradable felt having a density from 0.01 to 0.3 g/c.c., and a thickness from 2mm to 60mm. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the natural biodegradable felt of McCrory et al. with a density from 0.01 to 0.3 g/c.c., and a thickness from 2mm to 60mm, since it has been held that where routine testing and general experimental conditions (what plant/seed types the felt is used for) are present, discovering the optimum or workable ranges until the desired effect is achieved involves only routine skill in the art.

***Conclusion***

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Son T. Nguyen whose telephone number is 571-272-6889. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thu from 10:00am to 5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Peter M. Poon can be reached on 571-272-6891. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Son T. Nguyen/  
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3643